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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
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PURGES IN TOP NORTH KOREAN LEADERSHIP REPORTED

Conflicting South Korean intelligence reports quoted in 23-25 July press reports allege both that North Korean Premier Kim Il-sung has been purged and that, contrarywise, Kim himself is ousting members of the controlling Soviet clique and raising members of the Yen-an faction, men trained in China and loyal basically to Peiping, to important government posts. While a series of ousters of some kind is known to have been under way at Pyongyang since February, there is no evidence to show that it has affected Kim Il-sung, that Kim in fact has the power to conduct such a purge on his own authority, or that it has resulted in increased Chinese Communist influence. Although a purge of this magnitude would, if true, be enormously important to the US both in its short- and long-run consequences, the inconsistencies of the latest reports cast doubt upon their authenticity.

[redacted] a purge of high government officials began last February, [redacted] striking down Pak Hun-yong, Foreign Minister and one of North Korea's five vice premiers, Chu Yung-ha, Minister of Communications, Yi Sung-yop, National Inspection Committee Chairman, and Chung Il-myong, Vice Minister of Culture. All of these officials were members of the "domestic" faction of the Labor (Communist) Party, as distinguished from the Soviet or Yen-an groups.

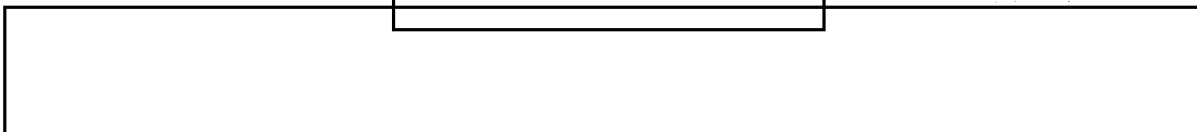
[redacted] South Korean papers speculated, without confirming evidence, that the dismissals were the result of a power struggle between the Soviet-trained elements desiring to continue the war and the pro-Yen-an faction which desired to end it.

In March the purge spread to the General League of Literature and resulted in the ouster of three well-known writers who were also members of the domestic Communist faction. [redacted]

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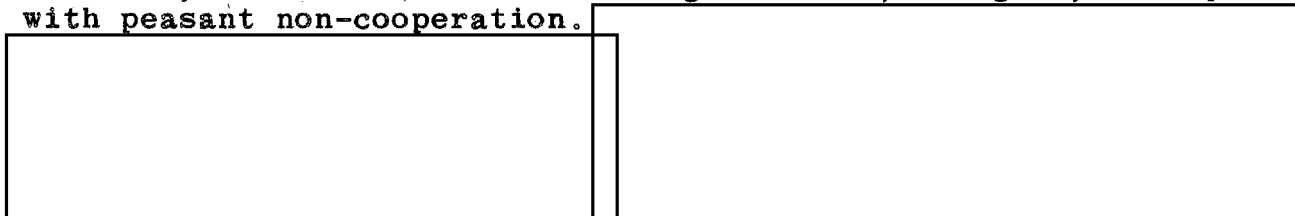
[redacted] the changes [redacted] apparently represent an attempt by the Soviet faction to remedy admitted weaknesses in the party and the government revealed by the war, to check any bid for power by the domestic group, and to prepare party and government either for peace or continued war. These moves would be logical in either eventuality for, if the party leaders anticipated a truce, they may have feared that the domestic element, enjoying a considerable South Korean following, was placing national unification above international Communist aims. If continued warfare were expected, the leaders may have sought to neutralize persons whom Pyongyang radio criticized for "disrupting the rear."

The beginnings of this purge go back to December 1952 when Kim Il-sung told the party that "no small amount of filth" existed within it and that this obstructed "party unity in ideology and will." This theme was expanded on 9 March 1953 when another party leader warned that the party was weak and disunited and that the dissidents could no longer be tolerated.

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These statements followed a complete reorganization of the local administrations which brought them more directly under the authority of the Soviet-dominated government, allegedly to cope with peasant non-cooperation.

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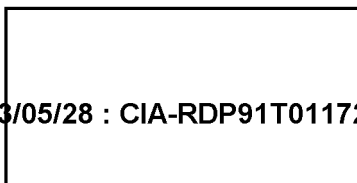


Further evidence that the Soviet faction was in control was furnished last week when Radio Seoul-Pusan reported that Pak I-won (Ivan Pak), a member of the Soviet clique with an obviously Koreanized-Russian name, had been named a vice premier.

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The most recent press reports first appeared in the London Observer, which quoted an American intelligence officer in Tokyo, and were later carried by Associated Press, quoting "South Korean intelligence sources." While some of these allege that Kim is out, they lean more to the view that Ho Ka-i, a Soviet-Korean vice premier who is generally regarded as the real power behind Kim, has fallen from favor as a by-product of the Beria ouster and that Yen-an-trained individuals have been placed in influential positions.

These reports, however, contain several errors of fact. First, they make it appear as if all the purges had recently occurred.

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Second, they attempt to show that the ousters represent increased Chinese Communist influence, although at least two of the alleged "pro-Yenan" people ostensibly raised to power are in fact members of the Soviet clique. Third, they allege on the one hand that Chu Yong-ha has been purged and on the other that he is slated for a higher post. Even if the latter is true, it would not reflect a move toward Chinese Communist control, since Chu belongs to the domestic faction.

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It is also difficult to tie these reported ousters to Beria's fall,

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It might be noted in this connection, however, that North Korea alone of the Bloc failed to comment on the Beria affair until 17 July, and then limited itself to quoting Tass dispatches.

In view of South Korea's adamant antitruce stand, it is suggested that these reports may have been deliberately planted to prevent the signing of an armistice. The South Koreans would hope to accomplish this by "convincing" the UN that the Communist truce signers lacked the authority to bind the enemy side.

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there is growing unrest in the North Korean leadership and could presage increased Chinese-Soviet rivalry, in which the future resolution of the factional question could significantly affect the Sino-Soviet partnership.

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